

# Health and Human Services

The Health and Human Services element of the Mashpee Comprehensive Plan was prepared to assist the Town in coordinating and enhancing its participation in community health and human services. The Plan reviews existing programs, estimates current and projected service needs and projects future needs for facilities, services and personnel.

The Mashpee Human Services Committee served as the Planning subcommittee for this element, while the working group consisted of the Town Planner, Assistant Planner, Leisure Services Director, Assistant Health Agent and Council on Aging Director. In addition the following individuals contributed valuable information about the services they provide: Sgt. William Ethier and Detective Doris Dottridge of the Mashpee Police Department; Kevin Chase, Gosnold; Marilyn Hughes and Cathy Auedette, Cape Cod Child Development; and Patricia A. Pap, Legal Services for Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc.

## *Goals and Objectives*

**GOAL #1.** TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF ALL MASHPEE RESIDENTS.

**GOAL #2.** ACCESS FOR ALL TOWN RESIDENTS TO A FULL CONTINUUM OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, INCLUDING SOCIAL AND LEISURE SERVICES.

**GOAL #3.** COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC, NON-PROFIT AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN MASHPEE TO DEVELOP A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND APPROPRIATE RESOURCE ALLOCATION.

## Objectives

- A.** Preparation of a comprehensive directory of existing human services for distribution to the public covering health & medical services, supportive services, emergency services, educational services and leisure time services.
- B.** To organize and coordinate the activities of human service providers in order to reduce fragmentation and duplication of efforts and to do so in a manner that respects the identity and autonomy of individual agencies to the greatest degree possible.
- C.** To secure space within the Town of Mashpee for existing health and human services.
- D.** To secure transportation for Mashpee residents to and from the health and human service providers.
- E.** To establish and fund a Human Services Director position.
- F.** To maintain and support a Mashpee Human Services Committee. The purposes of the Committee, working with the Human Services Director, will be to:
  - Ensure that there is a comprehensive range of health and human services provided to the residents of Mashpee in an efficient, coordinated and cost-effective manner.
  - Develop broad human services plans, goals and recommendations.
  - Advocate in support of the human services community.
  - Facilitate cooperative ventures between organizations providing human services.
  - Provide a forum for discussing important human services issues.
  - Provide information and technical assistance for identifying and applying for grants and other types of financial support.
  - Increase communication and networking between human service providers.
  - Provide an opportunity for concerns to be heard at Selectmen meetings.

- Network regionally with human service providers
- G. To increase community awareness of health and human service issues and services.
- H. To develop and implement a continuing program of assessment and evaluation of human services in Mashpee.
- I. To develop incentives to attract and retain human services professionals to Mashpee.
- J. To facilitate the use of volunteers, thus providing opportunities for community involvement, individual self-actualization, and additions to the human service work force.

## *Inventory and Analysis*

The element reviews existing programs, estimates current and projected needs and projects future needs for facilities, services and personnel. These needs were determined from the results of a survey of Mashpee residents conducted by the Barnstable County Department of Health & Human Services.

In 1995, the Department released a report entitled *The Human Condition*. This report contains results from the aforementioned survey on Town residents. There were three parts to this survey: identified household-level issues, identified Town issues and conditions within Mashpee households. Anxiety, stress and depression and difficulty with budget were Mashpee's top two household level issues, while at the Town level alcoholism and drug abuse were most important.

Mashpee residents were asked twenty questions about conditions within their own household. Some of the more significant findings include: 33% often have financial difficulties, 8% have no members in their household covered by health insurance, 37% have someone in their household who smokes, and 16% are neither employed nor self-employed.

The Town is currently providing funding to 11 Health and Human Service agencies. For fiscal year 1997 this amount was \$75,635. Approximately 5,300 people use these services in some manner. The largest provider is the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA), which gets about 45% of the total funds. Some of the services VNA provides include maternal and child health visits, flu clinics and blood pressure clinics, among others.

Cape Cod Health Services, the 2<sup>nd</sup> most funded agency, provides a number of counseling services, particularly related to substance abuse. Nauset Inc. offers assistance to Mashpee residents with physical and mental disabilities. Legal Services for Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc. (LSCCI) provides legal representation to low income and elderly residents. Their programs include the Battered Women's Legal Assistance Project and the Elder Law Project.

Twenty-seven children were enrolled in the Cape Cod Child Development Program's Head Start program. Independence House offers a number of related services to victims of domestic violence, including a prevention program. Two other agencies that offer assistance for substance abuse, in addition to Cape Cod Health Services, are the Gosnold Counseling Center and the Cape Cod Council on Alcoholism. The remaining 3 agencies are the Alliance for Mentally Ill, Big Brother / Big Sisters and Sight Loss Services. These agencies offer, respectively, assistance and education regarding mental health matters, adult / child companionship programs and vision assistance services.

In addition to funding these services, the Town offers some services directly. Illiteracy is addressed in an Adult Basic Education program offered via Leisure Services. Leisure Services also sponsors a Youth Center at the Mashpee High School to provide positive alternatives for teens to deter them from substance abuse.

The number one issue to Town residents is alcoholism & drug abuse. The Cape & Islands Partnership to Reduce Substance Abuse produced a 1996 Community Prevention Needs Assessment. A number of indicators were looked at and each was compared from the late 80s to early 90s. Mashpee has a higher rate of liquor licenses than the state, though a bit lower than the Cape. Our arrest rate for driving under the influence of liquor is over twice that of the rest of the Cape and almost three times that of the state. The controlled substance rate in Mashpee is lower than that of Cape or state, though ours has risen.

Besides the previously discussed programs, the Town runs a number of education and activity-oriented programs targeted at reducing substance abuse. The Police Department runs DARE each school year, and received a grant to start up a Cops and Kids program. Mashpee Leisure Services works with MACPAC (Mashpee Action Committee to Provide Alternatives to Change), which recently held a weekend outing at the 4-H camp in Brewster. Narcotic and Alcoholic Anonymous meetings are held at the Senior Center and Christ the King Church. Smoking cessation and elder outreach alcohol programs are held the Senior Center.

Household anxiety has been found to be directly linked to a lack of money and / or to unemployment across the Cape. Persons of working age simply cannot find enough well paying jobs to allow them to support themselves and their families at anything more than a basic subsistence level. Labor force and unemployment statistics reveal Mashpee's unemployment rate is half as high in summer as in winter, even though the labor market increases by 1000 workers. The unemployment rate differs within the town: north Mashpee and southwest Mashpee at around 10%, while other areas have minimal levels.

Lack of health insurance is another key issue. A recent study revealed that two occupations were found to have high rates of uninsured workers: Food and Beverage Services and Maintenance / Repair / Construction. Mashpee has 1/3 of its labor force in these fields.

Of concern at the town level is the issue of poverty. An analysis of poverty statistics revealed that there are two segments of the population that face a high incidence of poverty: single-females with children and persons over 65. The situation is acute for those single females with children under 5; 100% of the 60 such households live in poverty conditions. To move these females out of poverty there need to be jobs and associated educational / job training opportunities for these women.

The probation office of the Falmouth Trial Court indicates that the greatest number of cases they are seeing relate to domestic violence. Independence House statistics report over 700 Mashpee resident calls last year for assistance. Our sexual assault rate is the highest in the County. In addition, the reported numbers are never the same as actual incidents, particularly for those women victimized by an intimate.

To combat this problem a number of actions have been taken. The Police Department, through a grant, has hired a Domestic Violence Coordinator. This Coordinator will be initiating and maintaining contact with domestic violence victims, assisting these victims and tracking their cases. The Wampanoag Tribal Council has also received a grant and will be working internally to address this issue in a manner that benefits and preserves both the family and the tribe as a whole. The Tribal Council is now providing a newsletter, weekly educational meetings and a private hot-line to address the domestic violence issue. In addition, an Upper Cape Domestic Violence Roundtable has been formed so this issue can be addressed at a regional level.

A number of barriers exist, both real and perceived, to Mashpee residents being able to utilize existing health and human services. The #1 reason identified by the County survey is lack of information on these available services. A first step to reduce this barrier would be to distribute a human services directory to every Mashpee household.

The quality of life here in Mashpee can not be defined only by the physical environment. Our social environment is just as important in creating a just and sustainable community. The increasing gap between the haves and have-nots will not bode well for the long term. By taking the actions outlined in this plan, we can create a Mashpee where positive opportunities can be made available to every resident in a world where, it seems sometimes, negative forces are lurking around every corner.

## ***Recommended Policies***

The following policies have been established in an effort to guide Town agencies, residents, and businesses in achieving the Town's Health and Human Services Goals and Objectives:

1. To use all appropriate means to identify, monitor and prioritize the Town's most critical unmet health and human service needs.
2. To promote the efficient, coordinated and cost-effective provision of a comprehensive range of health and human services to the residents of Mashpee through collaboration with other public, non-profit and private organizations.
3. To support and participate in county-wide planning and delivery of health and human services, whenever appropriate, for the welfare of Mashpee's residents.
4. To assist local agencies in identifying and pursuing all possible sources of funding for health and human services programs.
5. To support and provide a central position within Town government dedicated to the coordination of all Health and Human Service efforts.
6. To support the provision of affordable quality child care and day care for seniors by all available means.
7. To promote public education regarding the availability of health and human services to town residents.
8. To support the inclusion of health, parenting and human services topics in the school system curriculum.
9. To encourage the use of volunteers to assist in the provision of human services in the town.
10. To support the provision of substance abuse prevention programs to all age groups.
11. To support the provision of transportation services which provide affordable access to health and human service facilities and programs.
12. To assist in efforts to provide locations for Health and Human Service agencies and organizations within the Town of Mashpee.
13. To exclude alcohol consumption from Town facilities and Town-sponsored events.
14. To encourage mutual respect among the town's various ethnic, racial and cultural groups and pride in our community's diversity through Town-sponsored or supported cultural programs, events and other activities and through school curricula and programs.
15. To support the provision of direct pediatric and other services for parents, affordable family counseling and other support services for families.
16. To maximize the utilization of school facilities and programs for the provision of health, social, leisure and human services to all age groups.
17. To support educational programs and services targeted at reducing the incidence of domestic abuse in Mashpee and providing support to victims of abuse.
18. To provide a full range of services and activities to Mashpee's senior citizens, primarily through the Council on Aging.
19. To support and encourage youth organizations related to sports and other activities designed to provide positive and creative growth experiences.
20. To support education programs on issues pertaining to reducing instances of smoking.
21. To provide for a smoke-free environment in public buildings.
22. To hire local residents for human services contracts whenever possible in order to make services more readily available and to reduce travel costs and time for out of town and off Cape practitioners.

23. To make additional professional training, both in Mashpee and on Cape Cod, more accessible to those involved in human services.

## ***Action Plan***

- 1. To provide the needed coordination between the various players in the Health and Human Services arena (public, private and non-profit).**

Responsible Party: Human Services Committee

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Short

First Milestone: Provide funding and office space for a Human Services Director.

- 2. To promote the availability of health and human services to town residents as one method to reduce barriers to service.**

Responsible Parties: Human Services Committee, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Leisure Services

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Short

First Milestone: Make a Health and Human Services Directory available to Town residents.

- 3. Provide space within Mashpee for Health and Human Service providers as a second method in reducing barriers to service.**

Responsible Party(ies): Human Services Committee, Health and Human Service Providers, Mashpee Planning Department, Council on Aging

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Short

First Milestone: Start contacting property owners of identified vacant office space.

- 4. Support the provision of transportation services which provide affordable access to health and human service facilities and programs as a third method to reduce barriers to these services.**

Responsible Parties: Human Services Committee, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, Planning Department, Council on Aging

Importance: Medium

Schedule Range: Long

First Milestone: Begin implementation of Transit recommendations identified in the *Transportation* element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- 5. Provide a process to ensure that the Town is getting the needed Health and Human Services for its citizens**

Responsible Parties: Human Services Committee, Council on Aging

Importance: Medium

Schedule Range: Annual

First Milestone: Conduct a review of funding levels to various human service providers. This review should be based on the goals and objectives set by the Human Services Committee (and Town), which should look at what services the Town is currently getting and where the unmet needs are, so more money can be programmed into (or redirected from existing services) meeting these needs.

Second Milestone: With the realization of budget limitations, the Town should apply for Health and Human Services-related grants utilizing the assistance of the Community Development Administrator (and/or the Human Services Director, if funding is provided for this position).

- 6. Support the provision of substance abuse prevention programs to all age groups.**

Responsible Parties: Human Services Committee, Mashpee Police Department, Leisure Services, Appropriate Health and Human Service Agencies, Council on Aging

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Short to Long

First Milestone: Expand DARE to High School.

Second Milestone: Coordinate Substance Abuse programs between the Police and Leisure Services Departments.

**7. Support and encourage youth organizations related to sports and other activities designed to provide positive and creative growth experiences.**

Responsible Party: Leisure Services

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Medium

First Milestone: Re-start a Town Youth Commission, working with the Youth Center, and get more representation and direct participation from the Town's youth.

**8. Provide both direct support to abuse victims and educational support to the general Town population in order to reduce incidences of domestic violence.**

Responsible Parties: Mashpee Police Department, Independence House, Upper Cape Domestic Violence Roundtable

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Medium

First Milestone: Make the part-time Domestic Violence Coordinator position a full-time one that services each town.

**9. Continue to support and expand, where possible, continuing education programs, particularly those aimed for job training Mashpee residents**

Responsible Party: Mashpee Leisure Services

Importance: Medium

Schedule Range: Medium

First Milestone: Get funding for child care and transportation services for the Town's ACCCESS programs, which will enable more residents to attend these programs.

**10. Support local efforts to reduce poverty incidences within the Town.**

Responsible Parties: Mashpee Human Services Committee, Economic Development Committee

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Long

First Milestone: Coordinate with the Economic Development Committee to ensure the Action Plan items in the *Economic Development* element related to providing local year round jobs and training programs are implemented.

**11. Support all efforts to increase child care availability to Mashpee parents.**

Responsible Parties: Mashpee Human Services Committee, Mashpee Leisure Services, Mashpee Board of Health, Cape Cod Child Development Program, Inc.

Importance: High

Schedule Range: Short to Long

First Milestone: Apply for Funds from Community Partnership to provide child care vouchers to working Mashpee families

Second Milestone: Increase the capacity of Mashpee's Head Start program to allow more single females with young children to enter the workplace.